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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the nature of dialect acquisition in an urban community with two adult dialect models (Detroit and Southern) available to black children. Although the children of the six black families studied were born in Detroit, each had differential exposure to the Southern adult variety of English spoken by parents who had recently relocated to Detroit. Two vowel variables were examined spectrographically in two speech styles, with results indicating that the younger of the two children in each family group aspires toward the Northern variety while the older prefers to retain their perceived Southern identities even when the local ambient dialect is in sharp variance. (MSE)

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DIALECT TRANSMISSION AND VARIATION:
An Acoustic Analysis of Vowels in Six Urban Detroit Families

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[1] Introduction.
[1.1] Overview.

This study is a micro-sociolinguistic analysis of familial dialect variation and as such is about speakers rather than language systems. In particular, its purpose is the investigation of childrens acquisition of their native dialect. Dialect variation can be a source of synchronic as well as diachronic change. Thus, a dialect's variability is closely tied to its transmission to the succeeding generations. And as such patterns of dialect convergence and divergence between parents, children and their peers can say much about both the phylogenetic and ontogenetic aspects of language development.

[1.2] The Data Base

The data to be discussed in this study are taken from Shuy, Wolfram, and Riley's 1966 Detroit Dialect Study in which a total of 700 people were interviewed: most importantly, however, was that they were interviewed as family groups. One parent and two of his/her children in each family were interviewed separately for about an hour. These family groupings allow for a direct comparison between the parent dialect (albeit only one, unfortunately) and the children's (for more details see Shuy et. al's 1968 Field Techniques book).

The present study focusses on only a small subset of these Detroit informants: six Black families in which the children ranged from nine to twenty years of age. Aside from the fact that parents and their children were interviewed, the other main advantage of these speech data is that at this period of time in Detroit many of the Black adults were immigrants from the South Central States[1]. This immigrant group of parents has, then, brought with them the Southern dialect as an adult dialect model for the next generation, their children. Thus, the ambient local dialect of Detroit, a Northern Cities one contrasts greatly with that of these Southern immigrant Black adults. A situation of dialect contact, therefore, exists in Detroit at this period of time.

All of the children reported on in the present study, however, were born and raised in Detroit. Thus, these data afford the opportunity to 'see '(and hear) normally invisible processes at work. Thus, they enable one to ask questions of the following sort: what conditions constrain the child's allegiances towards his/her parents' dialect, the peer group dialect, and if it differs from the aforementioned varieties, the local ambient dialect. Also how do such factors as age, sex, and peer group influence come into play? Among these Black children, to what extent is the Southern dialect adopted versus that of the local one, and is it necessarily an all-or-none phenomenon? In order to answer these sorts of questions about the child's allegiance strategy a dual dialect speech community of this kind in which two identifiably distinct dialects exist is extremely informative. Of course, the fact that this is a situation of dialect contact is not intrinsic to the basic premise of this investigation but merely provides an example of a clear-cut type of situation in which the child's dialect choice can be documented and quantified.

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[2] Perceptual Categorization of Speakers.

Acoustic phonetic analyses were used to distinguish between dialects in a quantitative and objective manner. Prior to these acoustic analyses of vowel variables, however, a dialect perception task was administered in order to objectivize judgements regarding the general dialect group that each of the Black speakers belonged to: a Southern or Northern U.S. speech community. Three speech-language pathologists blind to the race and family relationships between the speakers as well as to the purpose of the study categorizated these speakers. On the basis of this forced-choice perception task, the 18 speakers were labelled as belonging to one of three dialect groups : A, B, or Mixed. Anchor speakers were used in order for the judges to create their own dialect categories without reference to particular dialect labels to bias them. The A group refers to those speakers who were judged to be Detroit-like or Northern; and the B group to those who were labelled as Southern-like and the Mixed group to those who were given equivalent numbers of A and B votes by the three judges. Table 1 indicates how these dialect labels fell out with respect to the families overall and each of the three members within them.

Families Selected for Acoustic Analyses:

	Family	Parent	Child1	Child2
A's	Harper	A	A	B
	James	M	A	A
	Shawn	A	M	A
B's	Atkinson	B	B	A
	Sanders	M	B	B
	Jones	B	M	B

Table 1

Dialect Distribution

Key: Child1 = elder child, Child2 = younger child; A = Detroit-like, B = Southern-like, M = Mixed Dialect.

In order to refer to these families more easily, they have been labelled as either A or B families based on the classification of two out of three of its members. Table 2 below reports some demographic information about these 18 speakers.

	Family	Integration (%Blacks)	Social Index	Parents' Dialects
A's:	Harper	50	46UM	Louisana, NY State
	James	11	32UM	Detroit, Detroit
	Shawn	21	46UM	Detroit, Indiana
B's:	Atkinson	50	74LM	Georgia, Georgia
	Sanders	33	115LW	Detroit, Alabama
	Jones	75	109LW	Kentucky, Illinois

Table 2

Demographic Description

Key: Social Index; UM = Upper Middle Class, LM = Lower Middle Class, LW = Lower Working Class. Score is based on Hollingshead (1958) in which higher scores represent decreasing degrees of education, prestige of occupation, and quality of residence, see Shuy et. al. (1968).

[3] Acoustic Analyses.

The major focus of this paper is on the findings of the acoustic analyses. All vowels were measured spectrographically using a Digital Kay 7800 Sound Spectrograph to make broad band spectrograms. Due to the nature of the casual style interview, all ten tokens of each vowel could not be controlled for consonantal environment. However, as all speakers were discussing games they played and other leisure-time activities many of the lexical items used were the same. Only stressed syllables and primarily monosyllables were used for measured tokens. No nasal consonant environments were used.

In addition to these casual style tokens, a set of five tokens of each vowel were taken from a passage read by each speaker. As the passage was identical for most speakers these tokens could be matched exactly from speaker to speaker[2].

[3.1] The /AI/ Variable.

Table 3 outlines the strategy for the choice of vowel variables I investigated. The approach used is a kind of plus-minus strategy. In other words, certain values of these variables are interpreted as indicators of the speakers' dialect allegiance. So as is notated in that table Southern speakers are marked by the use of unraised /ae/ and monophthongized /ai/, whereas the Northern ones are marked by raised /ae/ and diphthongized /ai/.

VARIABLES	SOUTHERN	NORTHERN
(1) /ae/	- = [ae]	+ = [E]
(2) /ai/	+ = [a:]	- = [ai]

Table 3

Variable Coding Scheme
Key: + = presence of feature; - = absence of feature

The /ai/ variable tends to monophthongize in Southern American English, a fact which can be used as a quantifiable acoustic measure that is capable of differentiating the Northern from the Southern speakers. In order to quantify the degree of difference or similarity between the children and their parents, this measure needs to be independent of vocal tract size because of the normalization problem. Since diphthongs have formant trajectories moving between two different vowel target positions, the differences between the formant values of these two targets can be calculated relative to each other so that the absolute formant values (which can vary according to vocal tract size) aren't critical.

Besides these advantages, /ai/ has several others: it is high-frequency, it has a shibboleth-like status for the Southern dialect and compared with other diphthongs the two vowel targets are maximally distal in the vowel space (moving from low central to high front). This latter quality simplifies the task of quantifying the degree of differentiation between the two targets in both the F1 and F2 dimensions . That is, the more diphthong-like a token is,(i.e. having a Northern type target), the more differentiated or distal the vowel-final F1 and F2 values will be. Whereas, in the Southern variety, the monophthongal quality translates to the two targets, initial and final, being very close in frequency since the vowel maintains a relatively steady state configuration in marked contrast to the diphthong's time-varying pattern.

In the following discussion of the formant measurements 'A'speakers refers to those speakers judged to produce a Northern-like dialect and 'B' to those judged to use a

Southern-like dialect. In figures 1c-1g the six families productions of this vowel are depicted. Each figure represents a single family. The axes in these scatterplots represent differences in Herz, between the beginning and end of F1 versus differences between the beginning and end of F2. Thus, Northern A-like speakers should tend to have tokens falling in the upper portions of the graphs. That is, large differences between the initial and final portions of F1, as well as for F2, translates into large Herz values on these graphs. Each plot represents one three-member family with each member's plot symbol next to his/ her name, age, and dialect group indicated on the legend to the right. Those tokens falling in the upper portion indicates an A-like token or a more differentiated distribution pattern of initial and final vowel targets.

In figures 1c and 1f, the A or Northern families, Harper and Shawn, one may notice that, indeed, the A parents Richard SR and Elizabeth display an overall distribution pattern of tokens higher in the graph than do their elder children. In the Shawn family the two daughters, Monica and Marcia, also display a fairly differentiated distribution, although the oldest daughter, Monica, who was scored as Mixed is not nearly as diphthongized as her A mother (i.e.the dash markers generally fall below her mother's askerisk markers). The Harper family, similarly, shows the oldest child Richard JR, although an A speaker overall, to be very B-like in his monophthongized /ai/ realizations, while his younger B brother looks more like their A father. Thus, in both these families it appears that the older child has distanced himself from this parent, perhaps as a form of rebellion; whereas the youngest speaks more like the parent model. This appears to occur irrespective of the speaker's overall dialect label, as can be seen by a sort of dialect allegiance reversal for this variable.

The James family, figure 1b, with a Mixed father also shows the oldest, Linda, to be more Northern-like in her use of diphthongized /ai/'s . So although she is slightly more diphthongized than her father (at least for this particular diphthong), in the Harper and Shawn families, on the other hand, the eldest children seem to tend toward a greater degree of monophthongization than do their parents. In table 2 above, perhaps, not coincidentally, it can be seen that the James children attend a school with only 11% Blacks whereas the Harper children go to a school with 50% Black children. Thus, Linda differs from the Harper and Shawn children not by the fact that she has differentiated herself from her parent-model because the eldest in these families are similar in this respect as just noted; but rather in that she tends not toward the Southern norm for this variable, as do the Harper and Shawn eldest children, but rather toward a Northern one. And as mentioned above, this seems to suggest that the kinds of dialect models that the child is exposed to have a great impact on the child's dialect 'choice'.

In the case of the B families, however , like Atkinson, figure 1a, and Jones, figure 1d, it appears that the oldest children are closer to the parent model than the youngest ones (notice that in both these families, the dashes and asterisks are closer together while the squares fall at higher formant values). So although Pat Atkinson has more diphthong-like /ai/'s than her father, her younger brother Darryl is much more A-like in his pronunciations. And Oliver Jones is even more B-like than his younger B sister on this variable, that is to say, more similar to his father.

Lastly, the Sanders family in figure 1f, resembles the A families in that the eldest daughter, Geraldine, produces much more monophthongal /ai/'s than her mother. But her younger sister, Debbie, also labelled as a Southern speaker, has more diphthong-like /ai/'s which resemble her mother's pronunciation of this variable to a greater degree.

Thus, it appears that dialect allegiances are more powerful than familial ones. That is, the B families, Atkinson and Jones, whose eldest children appeared least rebellious, in

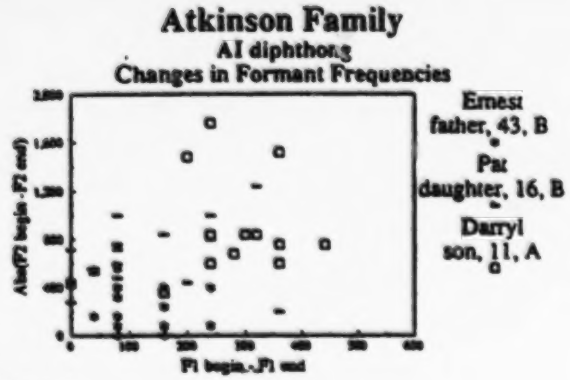


Figure 1a

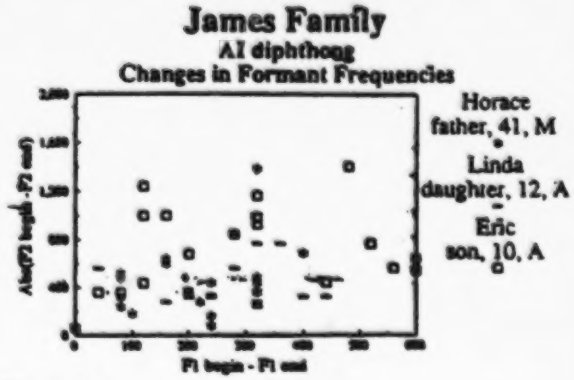


Figure 1b

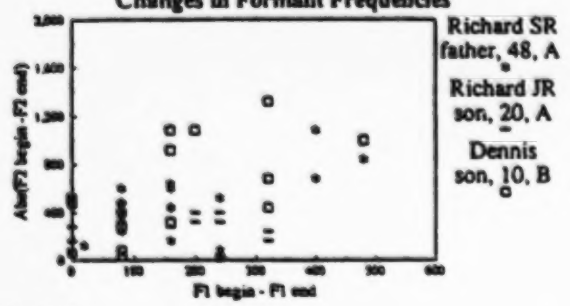


Figure 1c

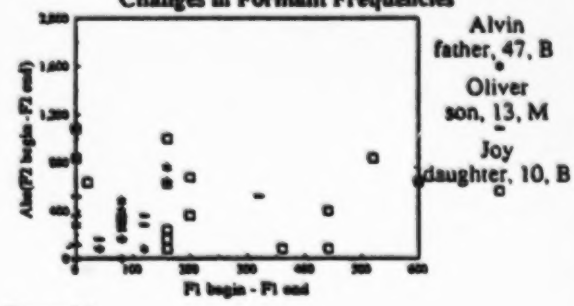


Figure 1d

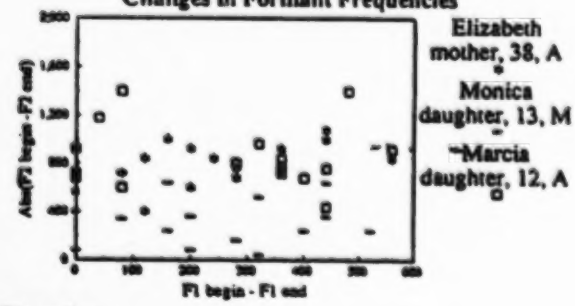


Figure 1e

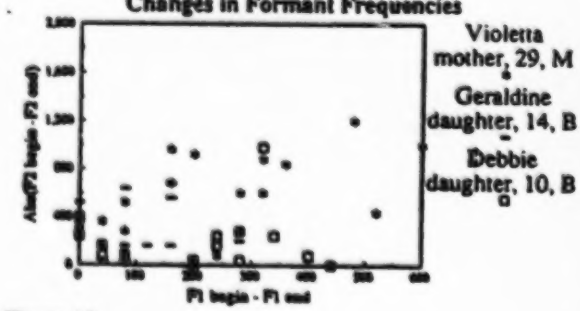


Figure 1f

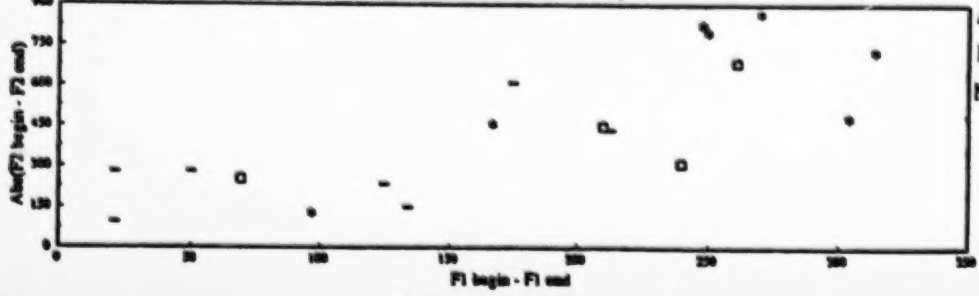


Figure 1g

fact, are aspiring to maintain their Southern dialect even though they have grown up in Detroit. It so happens that the parents in these two families have Southern dialects which coincides with the fact that the schools these children attend are 50-75% Black. So although they aren't rebelling against their parents or peers, in fact, they are attempting to maintain their familial Southern identities in face of the Detroit norms they encounter just outside their family and school environments.

The A families' pattern in which the eldest is more differentiated from the parent dialect, i.e. their /ai/'s are closer to the Southern variety than their younger siblings', actually resemble the B families. Thus, in the Harper and Shawn families the eldest children are very similar to their B family counterparts in that they, too, want to maintain their Southern identity.

The Sanders family, although a B family, has an eldest child who also produces more Southern-like /ai/'s than her younger sister even though both are B speakers. Thus, Geraldine, the eldest, is just like the elder children in the A families in that her mother is not fully a Southern speaker, (she is Mixed), so as her daughter, she distances herself from her mother in terms of her dialect's phonetic realizations in order to maintain her Southern identity.

The younger children, on the other hand, tend to be more A-like or Northern irregardless of their parents' dialect model. These younger children appear to have a stronger Detroit identity than their older siblings do. Thus, in the James family, the youngest Eric, is more diphthongized than either his father (who is Mixed) or older sister who is also an A speaker (similar to the Sanders family in which theirs is a Mixed parent). However, Linda James is a bit of an anomaly because even though she is the elder child she opts toward the Northern variety of a diphthong-like pronunciation of /ai/. The explanation is suggested by the following demographic facts: 1) she attends a school with only 11% Blacks, 2) both her parents are native Detroiters, and 3) her family's social index is the highest of all six families: her father is a dentist. Thus, she is clearly motivated towards a white Detroit norm by everyone she comes in contact with.

It turns out, then, that when production of phonetic level variables is examined in terms of the individual in relation to his/her family members, a subtle pattern of allegiance and divergence can be tracked. An individual belongs simultaneously to a dialect community, a peer group, and a family structure and as such there must be a tension on that individual as s/he develops their identity vis-a-vis these various groups. Production of the /ai/ variable as diphthong or monophthong correlated most strongly with the age and family dialect group of the child as to whether s/he diverged or converged with their parent and, therefore, with a particular dialect community in urban Detroit. The major trend suggested by these data, then, is that in the A families the elder children tended to diverge more from their parents as the younger ones converged more toward them, whereas in the B families the converse situation prevailed.

[3.2] The /ae/ variable.

The second variable investigated, /ae/ raising, involves more complex issues of measurement and speaker comparison. Because the measured formant values vary according to vocal tract size differences between speakers, comparisons between tokens across speakers is not as straightforward as for the /ai/ variable./AE/ tends to be raised towards /E/ in what is called by Labov and others the 'Northern Cities Shift'(Labov, Yaeger, Steiner 1972). Thus, the Northern speakers are expected to show a raised /ae/ target compared with the Southern speakers. Raising translated into acoustic measurement terms means that F1 is lowered and F2 is raised relative to an unraised variety.

Besides the /ae/ vowel, three point vowels were also measured, 10 tokens of each one, E, i, and ^ ,(inverted V)[3], were measured for each speaker. In an attempt to find out whether this /ae/ represents a vowel in flux, undergoing change in Detroit at this time perhaps as a result of these various influences, both casual and read style tokens were measured. Ten tokens of the spoken and eight tokens of the read style were measured for each speaker (except as noted in ff. 2). This strategy follows that of Yaeger (1975) in which she advocates not only looking at variation across speakers but within speakers across styles. Thus, if a vowel is undergoing change it will exhibit systematic variation between targets of the casual and careful speech styles.

> 'when more than one style of speech is examined for a given speaker, it becomes evident that the speaker aims at more than one target position, i.e., that his target for vowels in spontaneous style is not merely a less clearly articulated, controlled style target, but a target in its own right'(op. cit.:5)

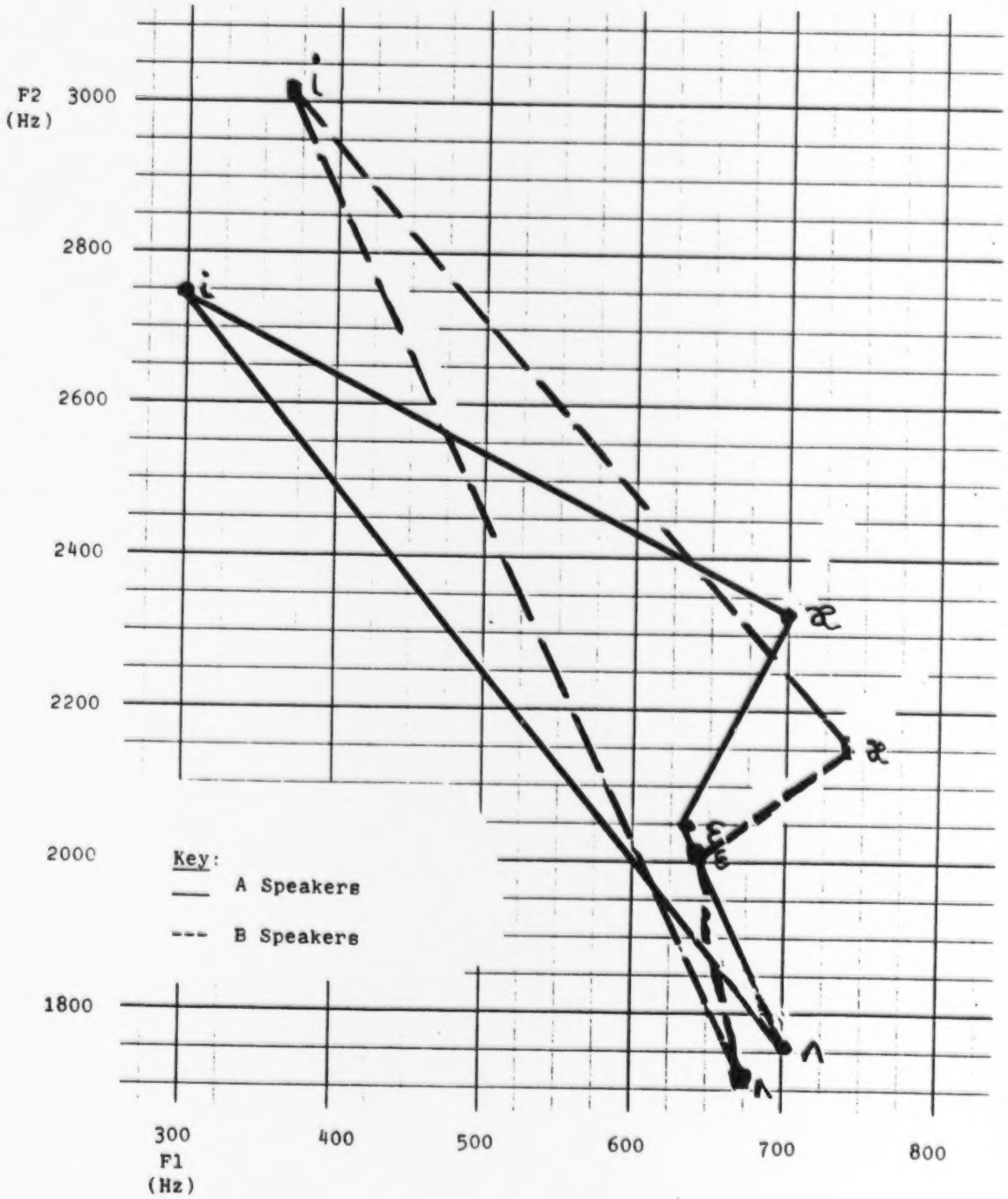
Thus, while /ae/ was hypothesized to be in a state of flux these point vowels were not and therefore expected to show less influence of style changes.

Before delving into a description of the individual patterns for this variable a few general remarks about the findings. First, the casual or spoken style /ae/'s (as they will sometimes be referred to) don't show a raising effect by the A speakers overall; but for the read tokens, which were much more closely matched for phonetic environment, raising can be detected in the speech of these informants. Second, because females and males show major differences in their formant values, i.e. males simply have lower voices, or fundamental frequencies, this can swamp the raising effect. However, if speakers are seperated by sex then the formant values can be compared across dialect groups in a more reliable manner. So that when the F1 and F2 means for the read style for /ae/ are averaged together for just the A-speaking girls they do show a certain degree of raising compared with the B girls' /ae/'s. These young A women's average formant values in the read style are 700 and 2330 versus 740 and 2160 for the young B women, which indicates some degree of raising in these A speakers[4]. See figure 2 for a graph of the averaged means for each of the four point vowels. This graph shows that the two dialect groups of speakers have overlapping but non-identical vowel spaces. When all A and B speakers' averaged means are compared, there is a very slight tendency in the direction of raising. However, the males in the two dialect groups don't show this raising relationship; it is difficult to assess whether this is simply due to the small sample size here, or whether there is a real difference in their vowel targets[5].

If now the speakers are categorized irrespective of sex, so that all A children are compared with all the B children, the A group, again, does display a slight raising effect over the B group for this vowel: for read /ae/'s the young Northern speakers had combined average F1 & F2 values of 667 and 2133, respectively, while their Southern counterparts produced formant values of 670 and 2037. Thus, in fact, the males' formant values don't succeed in entirely swamping the raising effect. This suggests a certain degree of robustness to these raising differences between the two dialect groups. This is an important point because in order to show that there are systematic and interesting differences among members of each of the six families it is necessary to show that mean formant values between the A and B groups overall do exist.

Finally, how do individuals within family structures behave? In figures 3a-3f, each family's members' individual /ae/ tokens in both styles as the means for each speech style are graphed. The open circle and square indicate the spoken and read mean, respectively. The most significant aspect of these scatterplots is the spatial relationship between the two means both within and between speaker. Specifically, the raising phenomenon can be detected by searching for the open square, or read mean, and noticing when it appears

Figure 2 A vs B Females: Mean Formant Values (read)



above and to the left of the open circle, or spoken mean, because this indicates a raising at least across styles within a single speaker. If a child's voice is higher pitched, for example, then both formants shoud be higher so the tokens would fall in the upper right hand corner whereas if it were real /ae/ raising the tokens should cluster in the upper left hand corner of the graph.

The A parents for the families Harper and Shawn both have younger children whose /ae/'s are raised beyond their own even though these two children belong to different dialect groups. In figure 3b notice that the youngest Harper appears to be a bit of an anomaly: first, although Dennis was actually labelled as a B speaker, his Northern-like /ae/'s relative to his father's indicate a possible desire to be accepted into a particular peer group. So he is obviously quite motivated to be A-like on this variable. His mean values for the spoken and read styles are raised above his father's (the differences don't show up on this graph). That is, F1 is lowered and his F2 is raised, thus his higher pitched voice could not explain this completely since then both formants would be raised. In the case of the Shawns, in figure 3f, Marcia the youngest, an A speaker raises her /ae/'s beyond her mother's in the read style, suggesting her desire to produce a more of a Northern-like target for this vowel than even her A mother. This kind of result in which the younger children appear to raise their /ae/'s toward the A-like norms regardless of their general dialect group, is consistent with the pattern just described for the /ai/ variable.

The James family, in figure 3c, has a Mixed parent and two A children. The youngest, Eric, again, just as in the Harper and Shawn families reported above, also raises both his spoken and read /ae/ means well beyond his father's and even his A sister's. Thus, his /ae/ target is the most Detroit-like in his family as he seeks to gain acceptance by the white community and since his school is only 11% Black this makes some sense. He is more A-like than his older A sister on both variables but, again, this is part of the general pattern that runs through these data: younger children appear to move toward Northern targets regardless of their parents' dialects.

Now for a discussion of the B families. The Jones family, in figure 3d, is perhaps the most intriguing in that the father, Alvin, and his youngest child, Joy, seem to both have identifiable different targets for each style. In the casual style, Joy has greatly increased her F2 values relative to the read one. Although, this is not strictly raising as indicated earlier, it mplies that she is self-conscious about her /ae/ pronunciation. Interestingly enough, her formal style /ae/ is most distant from the local raised variant. This result is consistent with the probable kinds of peer group influences on her since her school is 75% Black. Her father, Alvin, on the other hand, seems to use the slightly more raised /ae/ variant in the more formal read style. So although he is a B speaker he emulates the local raised variant of the A speakers when speaking formally. However, he appears to be relatively sure of his Southern-like pronunciation as can be seen by the two style means close spatial alignment in the graph

In figure 3a, the Atkinson family has a pattern that is not surprising, in that Darryl the youngest, an A speaker, does show a substantial raising effect over his B sister's /ae/'s. While both children have read means which are in the raising direction, their father's two means are nearly identical for the two styles indicating that he unlike them, is quite secure with his B dialect. While they, on the other hand, may want to participate more fully in the native Detroit speech community.

Finally, the Sanders family, in figure 3e, seem to care least about emulating the Detroit dialect. The mother, who is Mixed, does raise her /ae/'s above both her daughters

Atkinson Family
Vowel ae
Spoken vs Read

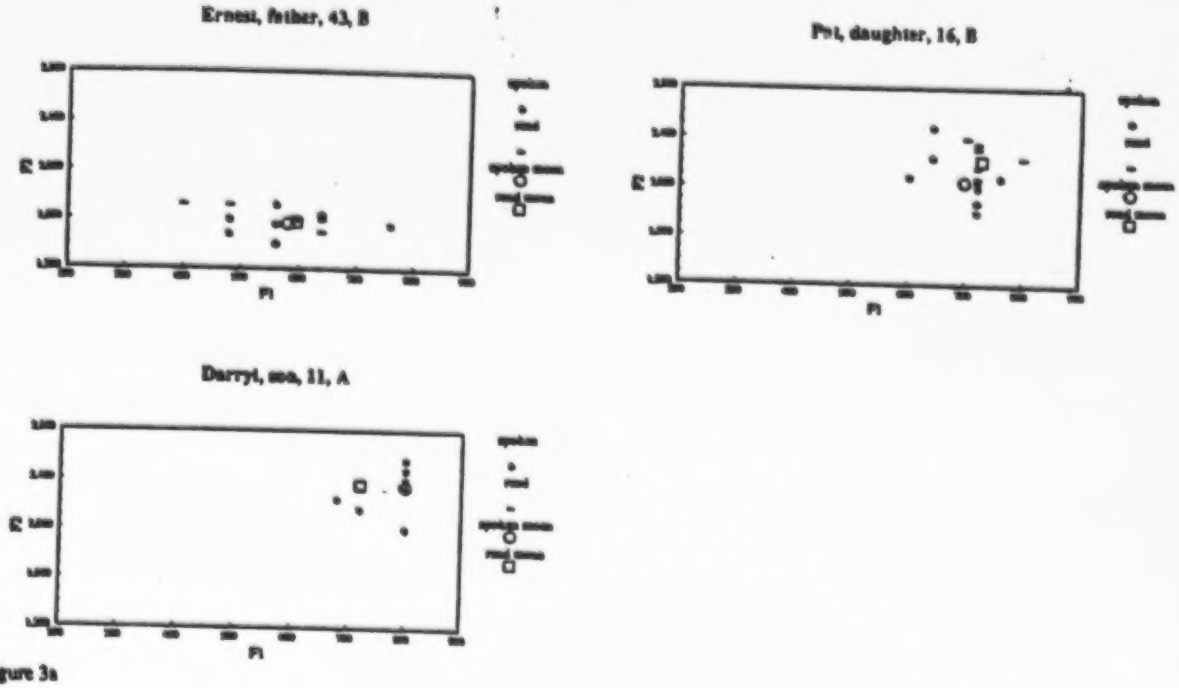


Figure 3a

Harper Family
Vowel ae
Spoken vs Read

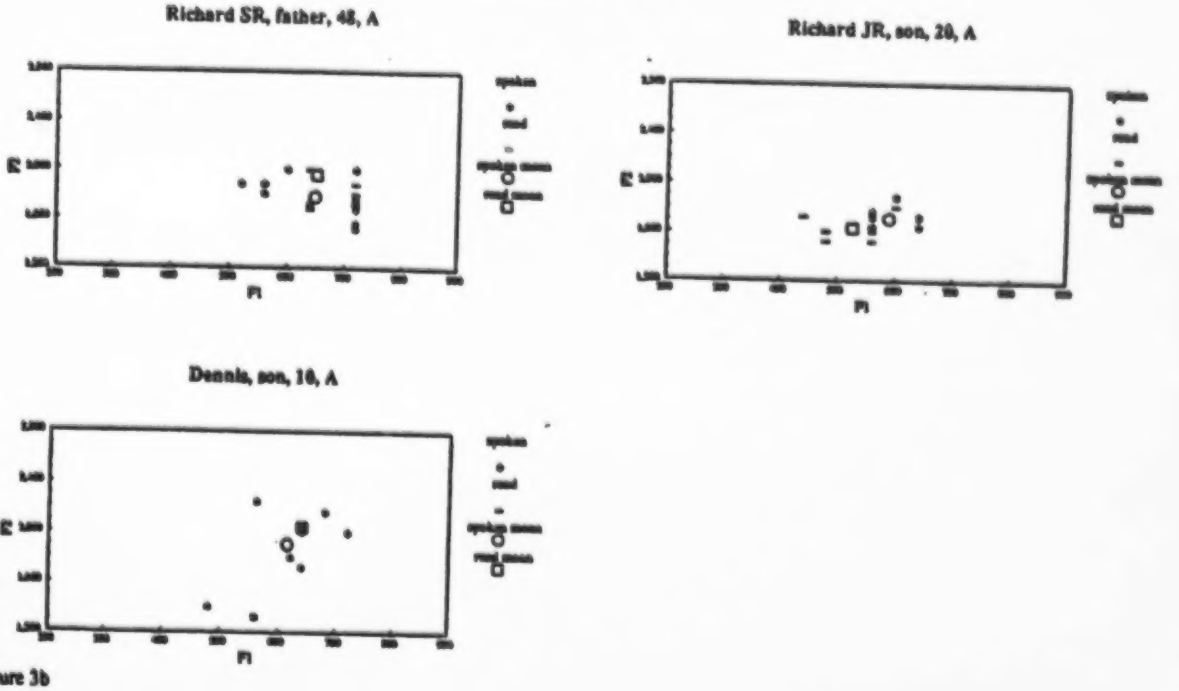
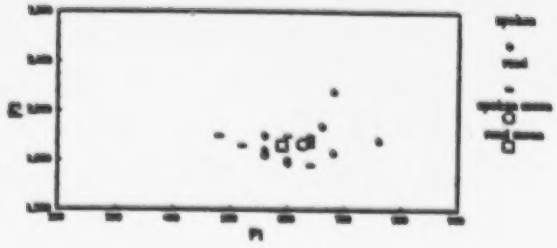


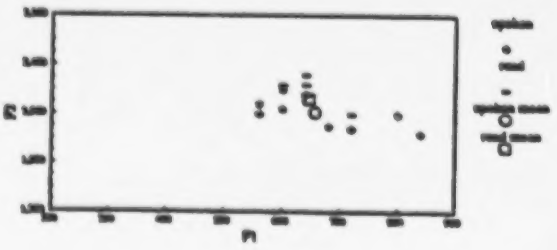
Figure 3b

James Family
Vowel ae
Spoken vs Read

Horace, father, 41, Mixed



Linda, daughter, 12, A



Eric, son, 10, A

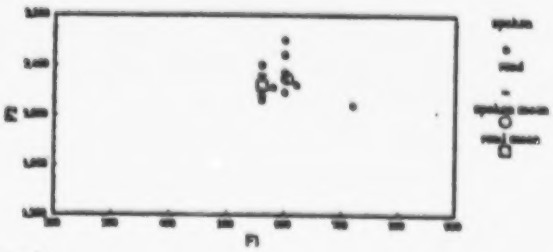
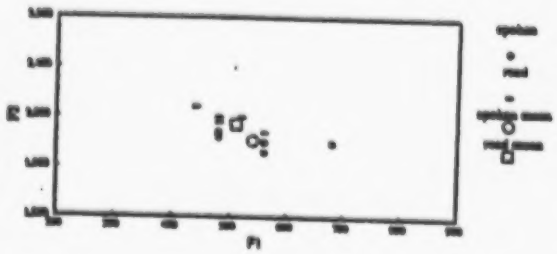


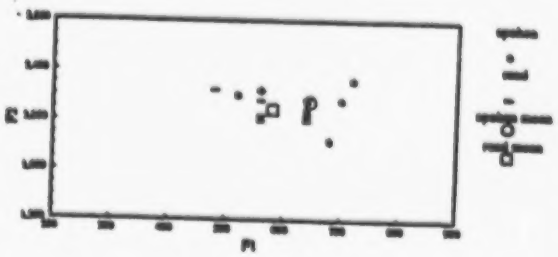
Figure 3c

Jones Family
Vowel ae
Spoken vs Read

Alvin, father, 47, B



Oliver, son, 13, Mixed



Joy, daughter, 10, B

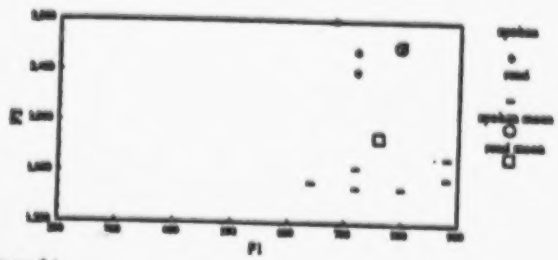
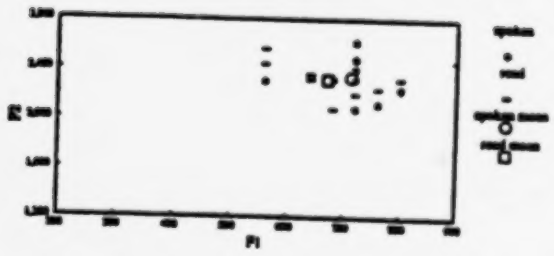


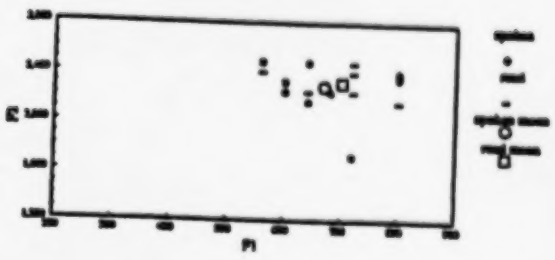
Figure 3d

Sanders Family
Vowel ae
Spoken vs Read

Violetta, mother, 29, Mixed



Geraldine, daughter, 14, B



Debbie, daughter, 18, B

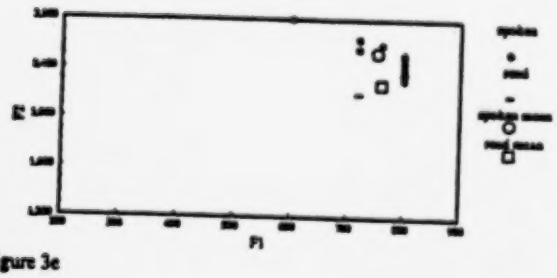
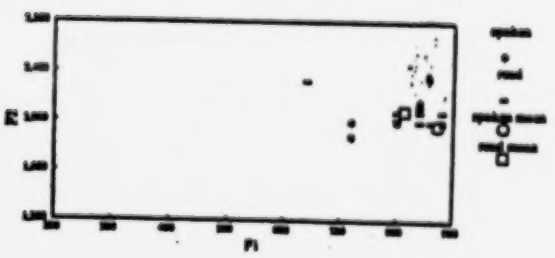


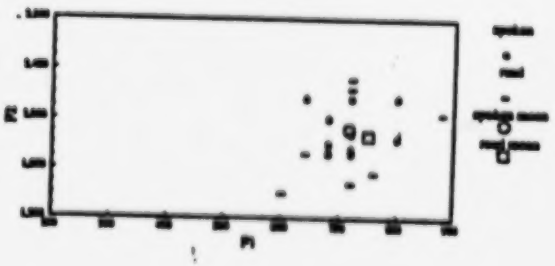
Figure 3e

Shawn Family
Vowel ae
Spoken vs Read

Elizabeth, mother, 38, A



Monica, daughter, 13, Mixed



Marcia, daughter, 12, A

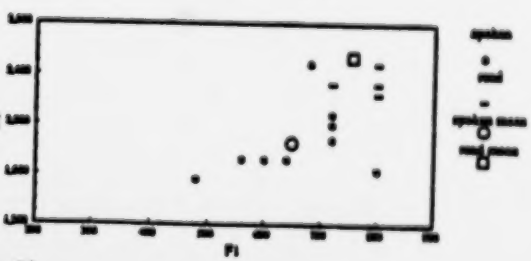


Figure 3f

in the read tokens which is not surprising as they are both B speakers. Both Violetta and Geraldine's read and spoken means are closesly aligned, indicating satisfaction with their non Detroit-like /ae/'s. The youngest, Debbie, however, has a read mean well below her spoken one. Thus, she does not conform to the general pattern for younger children being Northern-like. But perhaps her case is similar to that of Linda James, discussed earlier, who was pushed toward the Northern phonetic targets by conspiring forces. Debbie Sanders, too, may be pushed toward speaking a Southern dialect, partially by the influence of other children in her school which is 33% Black, as well as the fact that her family has a very low social index which may place her in a particular type of peer group; both of these conditions may conspire to make her a Southern speaker.

[4] Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of dialect acquisition in an urban community with two adult dialect models available to Black children. Thus, although, all the children in the sample were native Detroiters each had differential exposure to the Southern adult variety spoken by recent immigrant parents. Two vowel variables were examined spectrographically in two speech styles with results indicating that the younger of the two children in each family group aspires toward the Northern variety while the older ones prefer to retain their perceived Southern identities even in the face of a local ambient dialect at sharp variance with such an identity. Now, to be sure, these results were not then used to test Detroit speakers' actual perceptions of these patterns of transmission, however, from a practical standoint this was not possible given that this study used twenty year old data. On the other hand, the kinds of phonetic variability found to exist in this speech community are probably 'below the level of conscious awareness' (Labov 1966/82:224) for these speakers. Even though these interviews lasted an hour or longer not a single speaker discussed any aspect of the Northern/Southern dialect continuum nor did they discuss pronunciation of any lexical items. Also the fact that two dialects are present in that community may simply not be consciously apparent to these non-linguist children who have never lived anywhere else. Thus, if the kind of phonetic variability described in this study does actually lead to sound change in the future, it will probably be what is termed 'change from below' (op.cit.:224) and as such presumably would not even be accessible to speakers or listeners' judgements in any case.

Since a social dialect is a configuration of phonetic, phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features -- the phonetic patterns reported on in this study form only one aspect of the variation between speakers. However, it is clearly a very rich source of data about speakers allegiances and divergences with each other. Also since vowels are probably less conscious and carry most of the variation and change in the sound pattern of a language, such acoustic analyses could conceivably hint at the nature of speakers' basic underlying phonetic representations in the form of abstract target areas in the vowel space. That is, formant data allow one to specify the location of vowels in F1-F2 space and thus, allow one to observe the manner in which they cluster in a particular area in that space and so abstract from the shape and size of that clustering to the speaker's actual target realization of that phoneme.

What, then are the diachronic implications for this kind of synchronic variability? A useful way to think about these Detroit data in terms of sound change processes was discussed in a recent Trudgill book, Dialects in Contact. He and previous researchers such as Howard Giles have called it 'accommodation theory'. The theory attempts to explain why speakers modify their language in the presence of other speakers and listeners. Although Giles and others' analyses usually refer to short-term contacts, speculation about the long-term implications for these Detroit patterns might be useful. Trudgill implies that long-term permanent accommodation eventually leads to the acquisition of features from the target variety. He says that children probably have greater flexibility and therefore have a greater variety in their accommodation abilities. Most significantly Trudgill speculates that

'if a speaker accommodates frequently enough to a particular accent or dialect... then the accommodation may in time become permanent, particularly if attitudinal factors are favorable' (1986:39).

Perhaps these dialect patterns, due to accommodations between speakers of the Northern and Southern varieties might be the cause of sound change in the future. Trudgill coins the term "interdialect" (p.62) to refer to new forms created by the contact of the two dialects. Thus, it is possible that /ai/ will become intermediate between a monophthong and a diphthong, and that /ae/ will lost some of its 'Northern height' in future.. Since these Detroit data were collected over 20 years ago, perhaps someone should return to Detroit to check.

Footnotes

[1] In fact, from 1910 to 1967 the Black population rose 100-fold from six thousand to 600 thousand of to 37% of the Detroit population as a whole.

[2] Except for the younger children who only read a few sentences so that only 2-3 tokens could be obtained from them.

[3] The usual low, back representative /a/ was not used because of suspected social class sensitive variability (Fasold, n.d.) as was the case for 'open o' / /, as well. Therefore, /^/ was chosen as the closest alternative vowel.

[4] As noted earlier, in order to demonstrate that raising is occurring it is necessary to show that both F1 and F2 have a specific quantifiable relationship to the non-raised variant; the former's value is decreased while the latter's is simultaneously increased.

[5] The latter would be the preferred interpretation because young teenage girls have been reported by Labov, Yaeger, Steiner (1972) to leading this change in /ae/'s realization in the Midwest.

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